

Current Volunteers**Castolon**

Lewis and Susan McCool—Camphosts (3rd)
 Bonnie Winslow—Camphost (1st)
 Ted Griffith—Visitor Center (1st)
 Charlotte Whitesides—Visitor Center (2nd)
 Jeanette McKinney—Visitor Center (1st)
 Steve & Tina Ehrman—Backcountry (8th)
 Daisy Welch & Steve Blythe—Maintenance (3rd)

Chisos Basin

Linda Jarvie—Camphost (2nd)
 Jim and Mary Lynn Murrell—Camphosts (5th)
 Phil and Peggy Spruell—Visitor Center (2nd)
 John & Cyndee Perry—Visitor Center (1st)
 Barney Ghim & Paula Jampsa—Backcountry (7th)

Panther Junction

Elaine & John Jonker—VaRP River (7th)
 Joan Spalding—ScRM (1st)
 John & Delona Roth—ScRM (2nd)
 Larry & Julie Brabec—Maintenance (1st)
 Bob & Pam Bono—Maintenance (1st)
 Sonia DeYoung—ScRM (1st)
 Karren Brown—Administration (1st)
 Antonio Cantu—ScRM SCA (2nd)

Persimmon Gap

Mark Kirtley—Visitor Center (17th)
 Jim & Marlene Hufford—Visitor Center (4th)

Rio Grande Village

Amy Gibson—Backcountry (2nd)
 Walt Lemonovich—Backcountry (3rd)
 Mike and Nancy Coe—Backcountry (5th)
 Walt Oglesby & Louise Jewell—Camphosts (1st)
 Dave England—Camphost (1st)
 Dennis Hanson—Visitor Center (1st)
 Bonnie Auman—Visitor Center (1st)

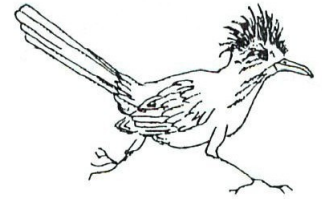
Resident and remote volunteers

Reine Wonite—Park Videographer (11th)
 Jim Bishop—BBNHA
 Mark Williams—VaRP
 Laurie Meadows—VaRP

* Number in () indicates years of service

Volunteer Connections

By Jane Brown



One of my favorite things as assistant volunteer coordinator at Big Bend is what I call a “crossover” volunteer. This is a person who originally came to Big Bend National Park as a member of a partnership organization and through their involvement with the park, decides to become a NPS volunteer. An example of this is Jim and Mary Lynn Murrell who have been “Friends of Big Bend” for many years. Three years ago they decided to become NPS volunteers at the place they love so much and are with us this spring as Chisos Basin camp

hosts. Another example of this phenomenon is taking place with volunteer Mike Garr who began coming to Big Bend in 2006 with the Sierra Club. This February was Mike’s second volunteer stint at Big Bend under the auspices of NPS and working for Joe Sirotnak, the first being on October of 2013. Unfortunately he showed up just in time for the government shutdown! Quite a disappointment for all concerned.

Mike was still living in Michigan where he was a fire fighter and paramedic when he made his first trip to the park. Upon his retirement, he and his wife, Rose, moved to Bandera, Texas, where Mike keeps busy fixing up his house and as a part-time librarian. He has led or assisted with Sierra Club “voluntours” for the last 40 years, often working as the camp cook. He has been to Canyonland NP for 5 seasons working on Tamarisk removal, Isle Royale NP for 8 seasons performing trail maintenance, and 5 projects at the Red River Gorge NF in Kentucky. At the Red River Gorge, the groups have replaced a suspension bridge, built a five-platform staircase and multiple footbridges over creekbeds.

Once again the Sierra Club worked on the Grasslands Restoration project in the Rosillos, an ongoing effort which began in 2000 when 325 acres of the most severely eroded areas were targeted for restoration. Strips that will eventually be planted with native grass and forb seeds are plotted to mimic the natural vegetation pattern of the land.

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After the strips have been plotted, loads of brush are staged along the strips. The brush is collected from other park projects such as exotic plant removal and fuel reduction activities. Once the brush is staged it is time to till the soil. A mule and plow was used to till the 8 foot by 500 foot strips, which are arranged along level contours. This arrangement allows the strips to collect water runoff and increases infiltration. The tilling breaks up the physical crust and allows roots and water to penetrate the soil. Immediately following plowing, the strips are planted with native grasses, often using a gas powered hydromulcher. This year erosion-control matting was placed over the seeds, although different methods have been experimented with. Once the strips are planted, they are covered with brush and left to await the rains. The brush is critical to the success of the grass. It slows the velocity of rain drops and decreases further soil erosion. Most importantly, the brush shades the seeds and lowers soil temperatures, providing the necessary environment for the successful establishment of grasses. Much of the work that was done in 2011-2013 was not successful due to the drought.



(Source: "Grasslands not Badlands: Arid Grassland Restoration in Big Bend National Park" by Christina Rinas)

This Sierra Club project is a national project and is therefore drawing attendees from all over the United States. This years participants are 14 from Texas and others from PA, IL, OH, IN, MA, CA, NY and Virginia. Nine this years participants were here last year and returned for more!

To provide a little history, the Sierra Club began its volunteer relationship with Big Bend National Park in 1993 with Lisa Mendelson-Lelmini as the first Sierra Club leader. She is now the Deputy Regional Director of the National Parks Services, National Capital Region. She writes, "March 1993 was our first Sierra Club service trip (with our band of friends). I was a leader-trainee. We backpacked about 8 (or was it 800?) miles to the Rio Grande along the Marufo Vega Trail. Our task was to join the 2 forks of the trail with a connector trail of about a mile above the river. Breathtakingly beautiful. And rustic. Our commissary was floated in by river rangers and we camped on a narrow sand bar on the US side 5 gal Groovers were set up in small canyons up a ways. If the toilet paper wasn't at the trailhead then the seat was taken. Truly a loo with a view. And if you're wondering what we did in 1994 it was camping in the Chisos Basin and revegging where the horse remuda once stood."

A new Sierra Club partnership will take its first step toward bonding when the Lone Star Chapter arrives in April to push the Rosillos project along. It will be their first volunteer excursion to our park with hopefully many more to follow.

Volunteers In the Park and Very Important Projects

by VIP Ron Payne

Chele, actually her name is Celestina but everyone calls her 'Chele,' had saved her pennies and bought her Papa a pair of socks for Father's Day. The day had arrived, Sunday, June 19, 1938, but she would have to wait until he returned from his duties as Town Constable of Terlingua before she could give him his present. As a 12 year old, she was as proud of her Papa as were her eleven siblings. Not only was he the town's Constable, but also a teamster with dozens of mules and wagon hitches to match, with which his employees hauled freight to and from the railheads at Alpine and Marathon, and he owned a ranch of two sections east of Terlingua up against the west side of Burro Mesa.

Sunday was usually a family day for Felix Valenzuela, his wife Josefa Baeza and his sons and daughters. Today though, Robert Cartledge, the Justice of the Peace and Felix's friend, had stopped to pick up Felix in Robert's car to go to arrest a man they both knew as a suspected Sotol liquor smuggler. Not wanting to disappoint his family by being gone for long, Felix called from the doorway of the adobe across from the jail in Terlingua, "Voy a volver pronto a casa."

That was the last his family heard from him. They next encountered Papa as his daughters laid him out on the table to prepare his body for burial.

When Robert and Felix pulled over the car their suspect was driving, the suspect got out of the car, grabbed Cartledge's pistol and shot Constable Valenzuela dead on the road at the edge of Terlingua, just short of the intersection with Farm Market Road 170.

A photo of Constable Valenzuela hangs in the Brewster County Court House in Alpine and his name is inscribed in the 'fallen officers' memorial of the Department of Justice in Washington, DC.

At almost 87 years of age, Chele still has the gift-wrapped socks she never got to give her Papa.

Ron and Jane Payne has been working on the Oral History Project for several years as volunteers at Big Bend National Park. He writes:

"I know this story, not because I read it in Ragsdale's book, after all he mentions no Father's Day gift; I know the story because I heard it first-hand from Celestina Valenzuela Amatulli at her home in Alpine. Chele is one of several descendants of the Big Bend pioneers whom Jane and I have interviewed as a part of the Big Bend National Park Oral History Project."

Be Kind To Your Knees!

By Jane Brown

No doubt about it, the trails at Big Bend punish your knees. Unyielding rocks, steep descents, and thudding drops over boulders combine to create excessive compression on your precious knees. Aftershocks of soreness, stiffness, and down-right pain can linger for days.

These features are a fact of life in our backcountry landscape, but there are things you can do to reduce their effects. Your knees act as natural shock absorbers. With age, everyone's knees slowly lose some of their spring, a process accelerated by regular compressive abuse (ie. hiking in Big Bend). Here are techniques can help protect the cartilage in your knees for a lifetime of hiking.

Conditioning your leg muscles is a good start. Making the muscles that support your knees stronger will help reduce the stress on the knee joints. Use weight exercises to strengthen your hamstrings, quads, and calves and stretch before you take off hiking. Warm up your muscles before you charge up the first hill.

When going downhill, walk like you are on hot coals or thin ice, putting your foot down very gently. No galloping downhill! When putting your foot down during downhill portions of the trail, use a gentle "heel-to-toe" motion. This spreads out the jolt that the knee receives from the heel strike, as opposed to putting the foot down flat, and having all of the jolt hit the knee at the same time.

This might seem obvious, but don't lift your foot off the ground any higher than necessary. The rocky terrain here makes lifting your foot high a necessity much of the time!

Use 2 hiking poles, and I mean *really* use them when going downhill. Hiking poles are like having extra knees. On long, steep, downhill sections of the hike, lengthen the poles, getting them out in front

Take small steps, and try to make sure that your feet are not extended past the point where the pole tips impact the trail. Two hiking poles will decrease the weight load on the knees by over 20%. Yes, you will wear out hiking poles on a regular basis, but your knees will enjoy the benefits. Hiking poles can be used as brakes on downhill sections of trail, and they can be used for traction on uphill sections.

Try to avoid placing weight on the knee when it is bent. Common sense tells us that something straight will bear more weight than something bent. However, we normally don't think of this in relation to our knees.

Use a high quality set of footbeds in whatever footwear you are hiking in. Suggested brands include Spenco and Superfeet.

Try to control your body and pack weight. The way I figure it, the less weight I have coming down on my knees, the longer I'm going to be able to hike, which is really what it is all about. Happy trails!

Information gathered from "Rainmaker's Hiking Mechanics", AMC Outdoors and personal experience. jb

Friday, March 28 Hiking Club Hike—We had a fun hike in February to Muskog Spring in the northern part of the park. In March we will be hiking in the West District, destination to be announced via email. It can be hot in March and a late decision will be made on the location according to the weather.

If you haven't taken a hiking club hike yet, this is a chance to visit with other volunteers and see something in the park that you might not see on your own. The hikes are moderate, not Olympic events. A van will leave from headquarters at 9 am and emailing Jane (Jane_Brown@nps.gov) to let her know that you are coming is a good idea, but not required.

Volunteers enjoy a break at Muskog Spring during the hike on February 25. Seated from left to right are Linda Jarvie, Pam Bono, Jim Murrell, Susan McCool, Mary Lynn Murrell, Bob Bono and Lewis McCool. Jim showed us a new route in and we had a great time!



BOQUILLAS PORT OF ENTRY **BEGINS SUMMER HOURS OF OPERATION**

The official Boquillas Port of Entry crossing, providing access to Boquillas, Coahuila, Mexico, as well as the protected areas of Maderas del Carmen, Ocampo, and Cañon de Santa Elena, will start summer hours of operation beginning February 26, 2014. The change in hours is to accommodate the later sunset times occurring this time of year.

Pedestrians will be able to access the port between 9 a.m. and 6 p.m. Wednesday through Sunday. No vehicles will be allowed to cross and there will be no commercial importation of products.

The Boquillas Port of Entry is staffed by National Park Service information personnel who can assist travelers with information about visiting the area.

Events in the Area

March 1 -Rabies Clinic at PJ from 11am-12noon at the EMS building.

Saturday, March 1—Chihuahua Race in the Terlingua Ghost Town, 10 am. Fundraiser for the Crisis Center.

Sunday, March 3—Terlingua Cookie Chill-Off— Rules are simple: how would a guide bake while on a trip? No electric, gas, or battery power in your preparations, but pre-made crusts, cookies, and cakes can be incorporated into your recipes. Recipes need to be attached to your entries. There are four categories: Cookies/Candy, Ice Cream/Sorbet, Pie, and Sugar Free (the sugar free category can be any of the three above.) Registration for each entry is \$5 and for those wanting to vote. \$5 will get you a bowl, a spoon and a ballot! Music too! This event is sponsored by Last Minute Low Budget Productions,

Wednesday, March 5—VIP Potluck at Noon—Come and have lunch at Panther Junction before the “Spring Break Meeting” - We will have a potluck luncheon in the Community Room and everyone is welcome to attend. Bring a covered dish to share. Iced tea will be provided.

Wednesday, March 5—Spring Break Meeting—discuss and gather information in preparation for Spring Break. Time: **2:00 pm in the Community Room** Everyone is encouraged to attend! Led by the Interpretive and Visitor and Resource Protection Divisions.

March 8-16—SPRING BREAK WEEK—Unbelievably, it would appear that all the Texas colleges have the same week off.

March 9—Daylight Saving Time begins

March 23—David Elkowitz and Reine Wonite are hosting a volunteer party at their house on Terlingua Ranch at 1:30 pm. This is a great opportunity to see how the other half lives out “on the ranch”. David and Reine have a beautiful house and getting there is half the fun! I will email a map closer to the time of the event. It is a good idea to arrange for car-pools because it is a bit of a journey. It takes an hour to get out there from Study Butte.

March 21-23 Open weekend at Davis Mountains Preserve—great chance to visit the Nature Conservancy site between Ft. Davis and McDonald Observatory. This is a lot of fun if you can break away from Big Bend for a weekend. More information at <http://www.nature.org/ourinitiatives/regions/northamerica/unitedstates/texas/events/davis-mountains-preserve.xml> Or contact Greg Crow at gcrow@tnc.org or (480) 458-6860.

Friday, March 28—VIP Hike—Destination to be announced (see page 5)

April 17—VIP Awards Ceremony in the PJ Community Room at 6 pm—Mark your calendar!

Every Saturday from 10am-2pm there is a Farmer’s Market in the Terlingua Ghosttown.